

Chapter XIV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

INTRODUCTION

In August 1992, the Waukesha County Executive requested the assistance of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission in preparing a County development plan. Preparation of such a plan was seen as an ambitious undertaking, with no other county in the seven-county Southeastern Wisconsin Region having completed a countywide development plan as provided for under Section 59.97(3) of the Wisconsin Statutes. Concerns regarding development patterns and trends in the County, coupled with a perceived lack of affordable housing, provided the impetus for undertaking the County planning effort. It had become increasingly evident that, in order for Waukesha County to retain and enhance its existing desirable characteristics, a plan to accommodate and manage new development while preserving open space and protecting environmentally sensitive areas was needed.

Initiated in May 1993, the planning effort involved extensive inventories and analyses of the factors and conditions affecting the physical development of the County. These included inventories and analyses of the demography, economy, housing stock, natural resources, land uses, transportation and public utilities, and existing community plans and land use regulations. The planning program further involved the formulation of County development objectives, principles, and standards; the design of a land use plan and supporting housing, transportation, and park and open space plan elements; and the identification of measures to implement the plan effectively.

While the primary purpose of the County development plan is to guide the County and the civil towns within the County in joint decision-making regarding development matters in the unincorporated area of the County, it is also intended to provide guidance to the incorporated cities and villages involved in the planning process. The participation of the cities and villages, in addition to the towns, was important because it provided a basis for determining the future scale of population and economic activity and attendant urban development within the County as a whole, thereby enabling the sound preparation of functional plan elements dealing

with transportation, recreation, and housing. The participation of cities and villages in the planning effort also permitted conflicting development objectives between the incorporated municipalities and the towns within municipal extraterritorial planning areas to be addressed. Accordingly, throughout this report, planning information has been presented for incorporated cities and villages as well as for unincorporated towns, thereby providing needed context for understanding the broader framework within which the plan recommendations for the unincorporated town territory have been made.

It should be noted that the Waukesha County development plan presented herein has been referred to and entitled a 'development plan' in deference to Section 59.97(3) of the Wisconsin Statutes, which authorizes county zoning agencies to direct the preparation of a "development plan" for the physical development of the county. The term 'growth management' has been widely used in the recent past to characterize governmental efforts to identify and influence the type, location, and timing of urban development and attendant needs for public facilities and services, transportation systems, and parks and open space, among others, while protecting the overall quality of the environment. Accordingly, the County development plan is, in fact, and may be properly referred to as, a "growth management plan."

The planning program was carried out under the guidance of the Waukesha County Development Plan Advisory Committee, consisting of representatives of the County Executive's Office; the County Board of Supervisors; the Waukesha County Departments of Environmental Resources, Parks and Land Use, and Transportation; the Waukesha Unit of the Wisconsin Towns Association; and environmental, agricultural, business, and development interests from within the County. The full membership of that Committee is listed on the inside front cover of this report.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Waukesha County encompasses about 580 square miles, or about 22 percent of the area of the seven county Southeastern Wisconsin Region. In 1990, the unincorporated area of the County consisted of 13